

February 2015

A Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire | Action Plan







Action Plan

- 1.1 Five Year Action Plan to deliver the aims of the Tree Strategy**
- 1.2 Key aims and objectives**
- 1.3 Tree Strategy Action Plan – 2015 – 2020**
- 1.4 Monitoring and reviewing procedures**
- 1.5 Community involvement**

1.0 Action Plan

1.1 Five Year Action Plan to deliver the aims of the Tree Strategy

The Council is committed to the high quality and proactive management of its tree stock. To achieve this we will use this Action Plan which demonstrates how the Key Aims of the Tree Strategy will be implemented over the next 5 years.

1.2 Key aims and objectives

Three key aims and seven associated objectives have been identified which are central to the Tree Strategy for the District:

Aim 1: To protect the District's tree resource through sustainable management of the tree population.

Objective 1 - Identify and evaluate important trees and woodlands

Objective 2 - Protect vulnerable trees and woodlands of high amenity

Aim 2: To practice and promote good tree care.

Objective 3 – Care for Council owned trees to ensure a sustainable tree population

Objective 4 – Encourage tree owners to care for their trees

Objective 5 – Promote the value of trees and importance of good tree care

Aim 3: To carry out and encourage appropriate tree planting to ensure a healthy balanced tree population.

Objective 6 – Plant and manage young trees on Council land to ensure a balanced tree population

Objective 7 – Encourage tree planting on private land

1.3 Tree Strategy Action Plan – 2015 – 2020

To support the delivery of the overarching vision and mission statement for trees in the District, and the key aims and objectives identified above, a five year action plan has been prepared. Actions have been prioritised as follows:

Priority A - actions to be completed by the end of 2015

Priority B - actions scheduled for completion by the end of 2017

Priority C - actions to be undertaken as resources allow

Ongoing - actions which are currently part of tree management and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future





Key to abbreviations used can be found at the end of this section.

Key Aim 1 - Protect the trees within Huntingdonshire District, through sustainable management

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
1.1	Develop the use of a map-based computerised tree management system for all Council tree management	May require additional staff resources and software, but once in place can be maintained by existing staff (AO/IMD/GIS Officer)	Auditable tracking of tree works and inspections; A more effective tree management system	To record inspections, and contribute towards a defensible system which replaces ad hoc system of recording and tracking tree work requests	A
1.2	Establish a computerised record of the Council's tree stocks	Existing – data can be collected as trees are inspected by (ATL)	Gradual ad hoc accumulation of data on trees managed by the Council	Information on Council owned trees needs to be more readily available To allow tracking of inspections and works undertaken	A
1.3	Initiate a prioritised survey of Council owned trees, incorporating amenity valuation based on Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees (CAVAT)	May require additional staff resources (temporary tree surveyor/ consultant) to allow high priority trees on areas of Council land with high public usage to be assessed within a reasonable timescale (ATL/GSO)	A prioritised system of inspections and tree work for trees on Council land with high public usage Some data on trees in lower priority areas	More effective and targeted use of resources for the management of trees Improved tree risk management by identifying hazard trees Use resources effectively	B/C (dependent on availability of resources)
1.4	Identify and evaluate important groups of trees and woodlands	Existing (AO/GIS Officer/P)	Existing data sets collated (ancient woodlands, ancient trees, nature conservation sites, TPO woodlands etc) Additional information to be added as required	Important information on the location and extent of important trees and woodlands easily accessible to AO to guide tree management	A
1.5	Develop a 'favourite trees' campaign to raise profile of notable and ancient trees in Huntingdonshire	Existing resources. Will require some limited funds for publicity - possibly grant available or could be sponsored (AO in partnership with TWC, ATL and ATA)	Raise profile of trees, particularly veteran trees of interest to residents e.g. tree walk guides, notable trees; e.g. Huntingdonshire walks. Fostering local pride and a sense of place	Raise awareness of the importance of trees both environmentally and culturally Supporting regional and national campaigns e.g.; Tree Council campaigns Useful education tool	B
1.6	Undertake mapping exercise of tree cover across the District.	Existing resources. Will require some limited funds to purchase software (AO/GIS Officer/P)	Accurate mapping and understanding of percentage tree cover across the District	Improve understanding of existing tree cover in the District and to monitor changes over time	A

Key Aim 1 - Protect the trees within Huntingdonshire District, through sustainable management

Objective 2 - Protect vulnerable trees and woodlands of high amenity

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
2.1	Make new Tree Preservation Orders as appropriate to protect trees under threat	Existing – officer time (AO/P)	To protect important trees particularly of high public amenity when they come under threat To have a transparent system of assessment	To protect prominent amenity trees from being damaged or felled inappropriately Protecting the landscape and the environment of Huntingdonshire	ongoing
2.2	Review Tree Preservation Orders	A gradual review may be undertaken as part of day to day works with existing staff resources. A wholesale review would require additional resources (officer time or through employing a consultant). (P/ AO/Legal)	More appropriate application of TPOs Tree owners not hindered by inappropriate planning restrictions Once initial review complete more effective use of officer time	Some existing orders are over 30 years old and have become inappropriate, whilst many trees that should be protected are not currently covered A review of existing orders would allow resources to be applied more effectively Existing Government guidance is that there should be a program for reviewing existing TPOs	C
2.3	Agree a protocol for investigating potential infringements of Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Area regulations	Existing – officer time (P/AO)	To ensure that there is a clear course of action to follow in each case To ensure that evidence is collected in the correct manner and with effective use of existing resources	Effective use of officer time To ensure that where a case is pursued the evidence collected is appropriate for use in court Ensure that, where appropriate, suitable mitigation is undertaken	B
2.4	'Guidance Note 3: Guidance for Trees and Development' to be adopted within the LDF as SPD (Supplementary Planning Document)	Existing resources (AO/P)	Clear guidance to potential developers on the appropriate retention, protection and planting of trees Improved protection and retention of trees to enhance new developments	To ensure that trees on development sites are retained where appropriate, and where trees are removed that suitable mitigation is undertaken	A



Key Aim 2 - Care for the trees within Huntingdonshire District, by practicing and promoting good tree care

Objective 3 - Care for Council owned trees to ensure a sustainable tree population

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
3.1	Apply the principals of Guidance Note 2: Guidance for Tree Management to all tree management decisions.	Existing resources (ATL/CS)	A consistent approach to tree management across the District Transparent decisions made in relation to requests for tree works	To ensure that the tree cover in the District is managed sustainably	Ongoing
3.2	Ensure that the work to Council trees complies with the Guidance Note 1: Guidance for works to trees	Existing resources (ATL/CS)	Ensure a high standard of tree work	To ensure a healthy and safe tree population	B
3.3	Review Good Practices Guides at least every 5 years	Existing resources (AO/ATL)	The guides will be up to date and reflect current best practice and standards	To ensure that Council advice reflects best practice	Ongoing
3.4	Implement a Tree Risk Management Strategy as outlined in Guidance Note 4: Tree Risk Management	Existing resources (AO/ATL/IRO)	A more comprehensive and pro-active approach to tree risk management Identify ways in which to reduce the foreseeable risk to an acceptable level and the resources required to achieve this	To fulfil the Council's Duty of Care	A
3.5	Undertake management which promotes biodiversity	Existing resources (ATL/GSO/CS)	Habitat protection and creation Sustainable management of tree population	Contribute to the aims of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Wildlife and Countryside Acts and Natural Environments and Rural Communities Act 2006	Ongoing
3.6	Review recycling options	Existing resources (ATL/GSO/CS)	Maximise the diverse and sustainable reuse of arisings from tree work	Good environmental management	C

Key Aim 2 - Care for the trees within Huntingdonshire District, by practicing and promoting good tree care

Objective 4 – Encourage tree owners to care for their trees

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
4.1	<p>Provide information on the Council website in relation to trees</p> <p>This will include access to this Tree Strategy and Good Practice Guides</p>	Existing resources (AO)	<p>Provision of advice and information on good tree care to residents of the District</p> <p>Reduce officer time spent on dealing with requests for general information; time to be diverted to other projects</p>	<p>More effective use of staff resources. General information and advice could be provided more comprehensively and effectively via the website.</p> <p>Residents would have access to information out of office hours</p>	A
4.2	Produce a set of leaflets based on the Good Practice Guides for those people who do not have access to the internet	Funds for the production of leaflets to be identified (AO)	As above	Would ensure that those residents without access to the internet can access information and advice	A
4.3	Use planning powers (Development Control & S106 agreements) to generate management plans for woodland and new planting on private land	Existing resources (AO/P)	<p>Increase woodland under appropriate management</p> <p>Soft landscape and tree planting on new developments managed appropriately</p>	To ensure that the tree planting and management undertaken as part of planning and development process is sustainably managed	Ongoing



Key Aim 2 - Care for the trees within Huntingdonshire District, by practicing and promoting good tree care

Objective 5 - Promote the value of trees and importance of good tree care

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
5.1	Provide information on the Council website and in leaflets in relation to management and care of trees	Existing resources (AO) Funds will be required to produce leaflets	Improved provision of advice and information on good tree care to residents of the District	To ensure that the public have access to good practice guidance particularly in relation to tree pruning	A
5.2	Continue to support the Tree Warden network in the District	Tree Council membership and payment of some expenses to wardens for tree warden forum/other training days. Estimated £750 year.(TWC)	Provide local information on trees and bring any threats to trees to the attention of the AO Develop ideas for local projects and organise and encourage tree planting and other practical work Acting as a local community liaison – giving general advice on planting and grants etc	To promote the value and importance of trees on a local level To empower local communities to become involved in managing and planting trees in their local area. Promote good tree care planting and maintenance	Ongoing
5.3	Assist friends of parks in producing self-guided walk leaflets which indicate trees and wildlife of interest	Production of leaflets will incur some costs which may be met out of existing resources	Raise awareness of local trees and the environment Educational resource for schools	To promote the value and importance of trees on a local level	C

Key Aim 3 - Plant more trees within Huntingdonshire District, by promoting and carrying out appropriate tree planting.

Objective 6 – Plant and managed young trees on Council land to ensure a healthy balanced tree population

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
6.1	Plant at least 1 replacement tree for each one felled on HDC land	Existing resources plus additional resources from grant funding as part of larger projects to be utilised where possible (ATL/GSO/CS)	At least maintain current tree population on Council land. Although replacement may not always be in the same place, one will be planted in an appropriate alternative location	To maintain a sustainable and balanced population of trees	A
6.2	Manage natural regeneration in Council owned woodlands	Existing resources plus additional resources from grant funding as part of larger projects to be utilised where possible (ATL/GSO/CS)	Maximise the potential for tree replacement using local natural stock rather than introduced trees Improved cost-effectiveness therefore allowing resources to be diverted elsewhere	More natural, sustainable and cost effective method of tree replacement where appropriate	B
6.3	Identify suitable areas for tree planting – including larger scale planting	Existing resources (AO/ATL/GSO)	A more comprehensive and strategic approach to increasing tree cover in the District Will contribute to exceeding the 1 for 1 tree replacement policy Will enable the maximum use of available grant funding	More strategic approach to maintaining a sustainable tree population	B



Key Aim 3 - Plant more trees within Huntingdonshire District, by promoting and carrying out appropriate tree planting.

Objective 7 – Encourage tree planting on private land

	Action	Resources required (Key staff involvement)	Expected outcomes	Reason	Priority
7.1	Provide information on the Council website in relation to tree planting	Existing resources (AO)	Easier access to appropriate information More appropriate tree planting being undertaken	To assist local residents in tree planting by providing useful advice	A
7.2	Pursue replacement planting made as a condition of planning permission, and TPO application. Enforcement powers to be used if necessary	Existing resources (AO/P)	Ensure that where it is appropriate, tree replacement occurs	To maximise the potential for appropriate tree planting on private land Maintain the landscape character	Ongoing
7.3	Encourage tree planting as part of development proposals and new infrastructure (regeneration schemes, etc.)	Existing or grant aided as part of larger scale projects (AO/L/P)	Appropriate tree planting as part of new developments	To ensure opportunities for new tree planting are identified and undertaken to mitigate the loss of trees for development	Ongoing
7.4	Continue to support the Parish Planting Scheme	Existing resources (TWC)	Thousands of new trees planted on private land each year	Raise profile of tree planting To encourage Parish Councils, individual land owners and smaller community groups to plant trees	A

Table abbreviations

AO Arboricultural Officer
ATA Arboricultural Technical Assistant
ATL Arboricultural Team Leader
CCC Cambridgeshire County Council
CS Countryside Services
CWT Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust
GIS GIS Officer
GSO Green Space Officer
HDC Huntingdonshire District Council

IMD Information Management Division
IRO Insurance/Risk Officer
L Luminus Group
P Planning
TWC Tree Warden Co-ordinator
WT Woodland Trust

1.4 Monitoring and reviewing procedures

It will be necessary for monitoring to be carried out in order for the success of the Tree Strategy to be assessed and to assist in identifying areas where new or amended tree policy is necessary. A series of performance indicators have been identified to facilitate this monitoring and are detailed below:

- Number of new trees successfully established each year broken down to identify trees on private land, as a result of TPO application conditions, planning application conditions, Parish Planting Scheme, and for trees on HDC land, Countryside, Green Spaces, and County Council land.
- Number of management plans produced and successfully implemented for woodland sites
- Number of trained Tree Wardens actively taking part in community events
- Number of parks and open space sites in which trees have been inspected and database updated
- Analysis of claims made, number of claims successfully defended and amount spent on insurance claims, broken down into tree and branch failures, and alleged root damage claims.
- Number of trees removed or permitted to be removed by the Council

This Tree Strategy will need to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It should be a dynamic document which can respond to changes in the District, new legislation and emerging industry best practice. As a minimum it is recommended that the Tree Strategy is reviewed every five years. The review should include:

- A detailed analysis of the monitoring information

- Identification of any obstacles or barriers to implementation and delivery of the policy contained within the strategy
- Recommendations for amendments to the Strategy to respond to findings from the above

1.5 Community involvement

The success of the Tree Strategy will be greatest if it has the support of the District's community and the involvement of the community in its implementation. The following measures are proposed to promote community support and involvement in the Tree Strategy:

- Public consultation on the draft Tree Strategy
- High profile launch of the final Tree Strategy with press and web releases
- Continue to support the District Tree Warden scheme
- Continue existing parish planting scheme



Oak trees near Wooley